

MARVEL

#7

**DAVID
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BEN REILLY:

THE SCARLET SPIDER



Years ago, Miles Warren, one of Peter Parker's college professors, stole a sample of Peter's genetic material and used it to create a perfect clone of Spider-Man. With all of Peter's memories, the clone fled. Created, not born, and without an identity of his own, he gave himself a new name and made his own way in the world as...



BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER

Ben Reilly has been lying low in Las Vegas. Fortunately, he has found an unlikely ally in Cassandra Mercury, owner of the MERCURY RISING casino.

Mercury's young daughter, Abigail, has been afflicted with a rare medical condition. In exchange for a place to stay and the equipment necessary to conduct his research, Reilly has offered to search for a cure for the deadly disease. Kaine, another clone of Peter Parker, came to Las Vegas intending to kill Ben, but decided to let him live until he could cure Abigail.

Ben came up with a serum meant to slow the disease's progress, but after administering it, Abigail died. Then, a mysterious woman named **Marlo Chandler** put Kaine out of commission, killing him with a single touch of her hand.

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ONE MINUTE HE WAS
STANDING THERE,
THREATENING ME.

AND THEN
SHE TOUCHED
HIM AND--

KAINE?
KAINE!





HE'S DEAD, BEN. SHOUTING AT HIM ISN'T GOING TO CHANGE THE SITUATION.

NO! NO WAY! IT DOESN'T END LIKE THIS!

W-WE HAVE TO HAVE A BIG FINAL BATTLE! SOMEBODY HAS TO WIN, SOMEBODY HAS TO DIE!

SOMEONE HAS.



ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR...

BEN, YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME.



SHUT UP!



~HUFF~
~HUFF~



ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE...

FINE. DO THIS FOR AS LONG AS YOU WANT. I CAN WAIT.



I DO THIS FOR FIVE MINUTES. THE FIVE LONGEST MINUTES OF MY LIFE.

OF ANY OF MY LIVES.



HOW DID YOU DO IT?

KILL HIM?

NO, LEARN TO RIVERDANCE.

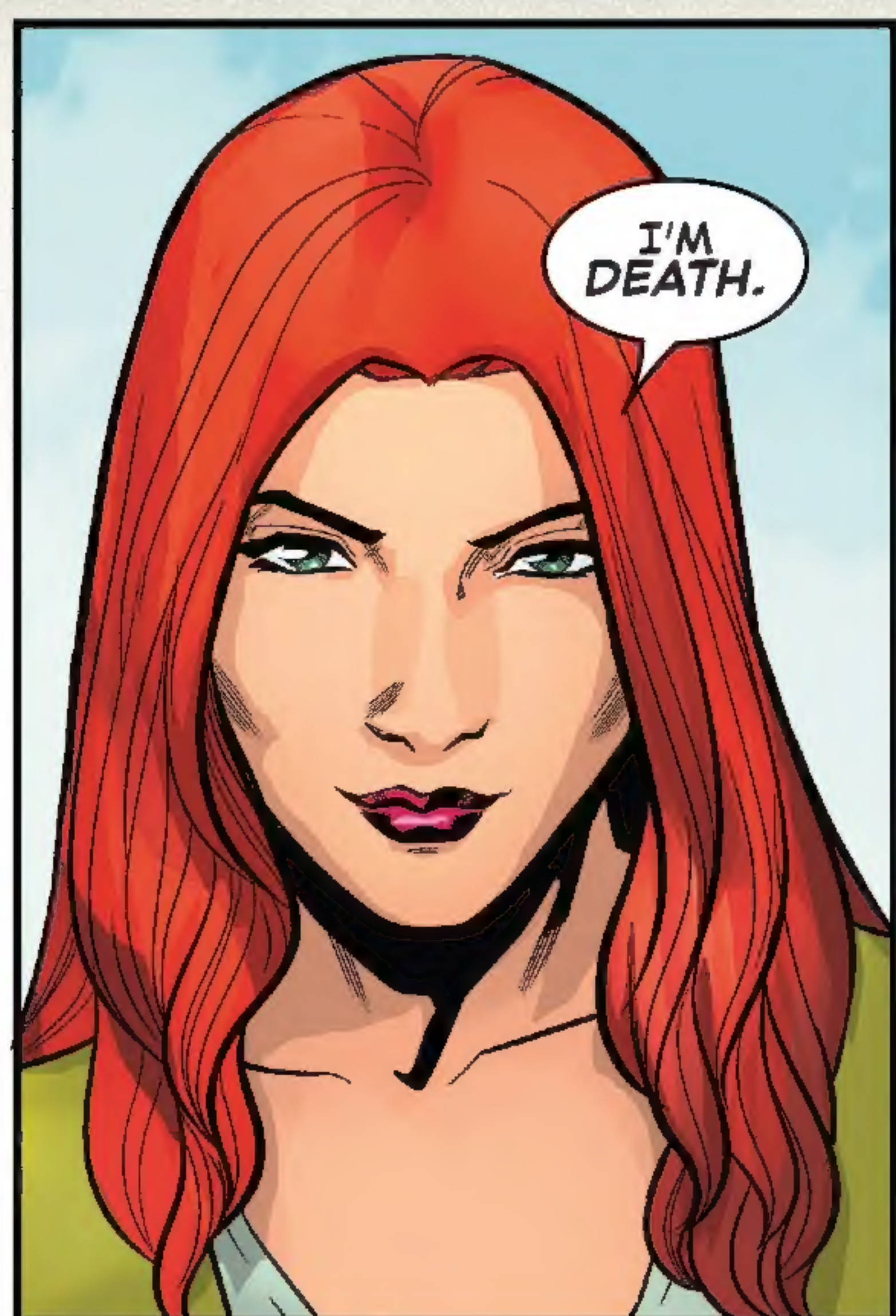
DO YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF MUTANT DEATH TOUCH? OR ARE YOU AN INHUMAN?



WELL, YES, I AM INHUMAN, BUT NOT THE WAY I SUSPECT YOU INTEND.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU'RE MARLO CHANDLER. YOU AND RICK JONES USED--



I'M DEATH.



YOU MEAN METAPHORICALLY, LIKE THE PUNISHER OR WOLVERINE...

NO, LITERALLY. I'M DEATH.

IS THIS SOME SORT OF WEIRD JOKE?



I DON'T TELL JOKES. OR UNDERSTAND THEM. OR LAUGH.

YOU DON'T LAUGH. YOU JUST KILL PEOPLE.

WELL, I DO SOME OTHER THINGS, TOO, BUT MOSTLY, YES.

BECAUSE YOU'RE DEATH. THE DARK ANGEL. THE GRIM REAPER.

THAT'S CORRECT.

YOU'RE NUTS IS WHAT YOU ARE! BRING HIM BACK!



YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE ENVISIONING IT.

JUST A LITTLE. WHY DON'T YOU PROVE IT BY--



DOES
THIS
HELP?

OH MY
GOD!

OH MY
GOD.

OH MY GOD.
OH MY GOD.

OH MY GOD.
OH MY GOD.
OHMIGODOHMIGOD.
OHMIGOD.

IT'S A TRICK. SHE'S
AN ILLUSIONIST OR A
TELEPATH OR AN
ALIEN ROOTING
AROUND IN MY MIND.

EXPLOITING
MY FEARS.



BEN?

BEN, IT'S
OKAY. YOU
CAN LOOK
NOW.



SEE?

ALL
BETTER.



SO...
YOU'RE
DEATH.

YES.

THE
COSMIC
ENTITY.

DEATH.

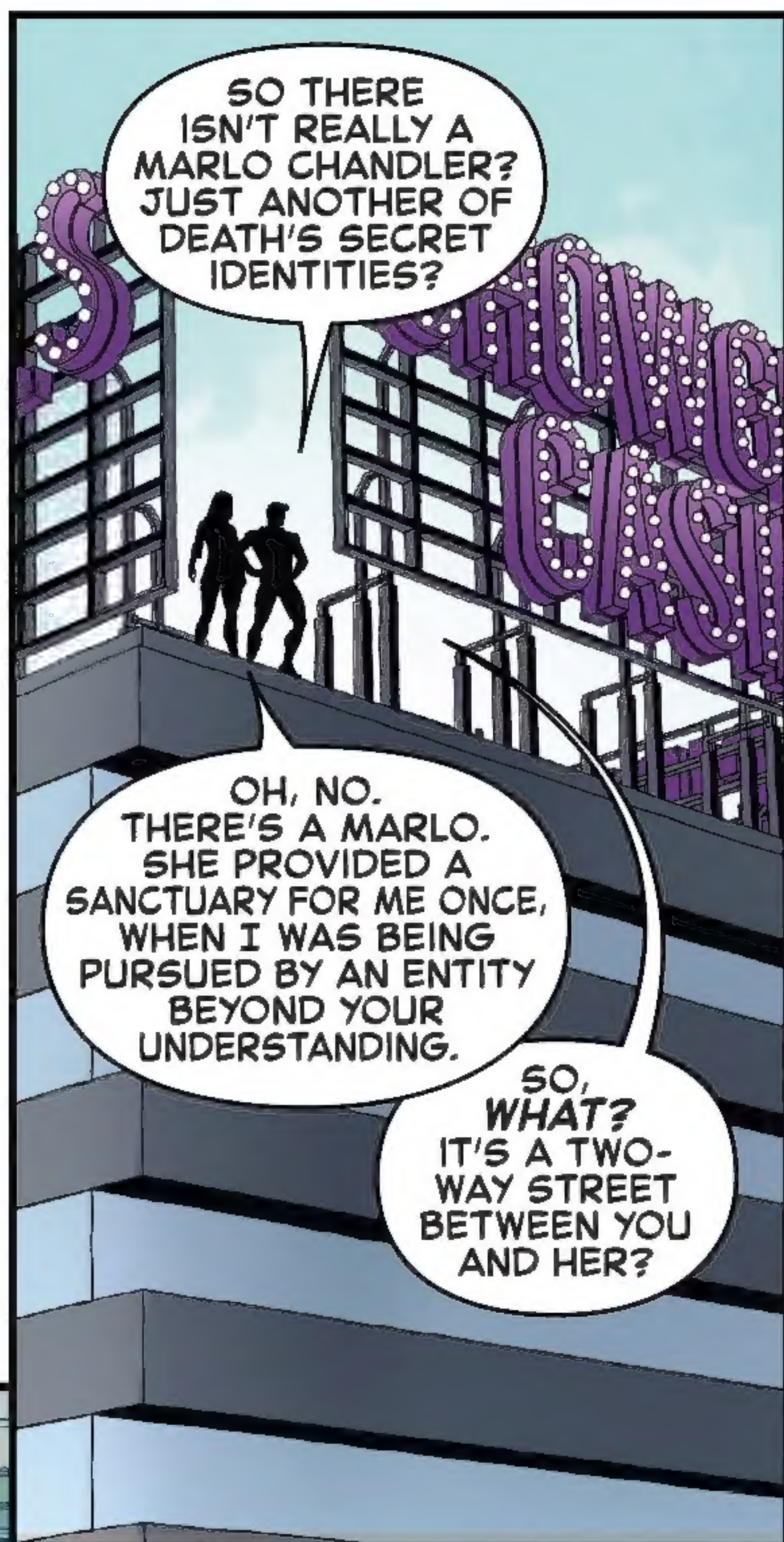
THAT'S
RIGHT.



WOW.
YOU
REALLY
SUCK.

I GET
THAT A
LOT.





SO THERE ISN'T REALLY A MARLO CHANDLER? JUST ANOTHER OF DEATH'S SECRET IDENTITIES?

OH, NO. THERE'S A MARLO. SHE PROVIDED A SANCTUARY FOR ME ONCE, WHEN I WAS BEING PURSUED BY AN ENTITY BEYOND YOUR UNDERSTANDING.

SO, WHAT? IT'S A TWO-WAY STREET BETWEEN YOU AND HER?



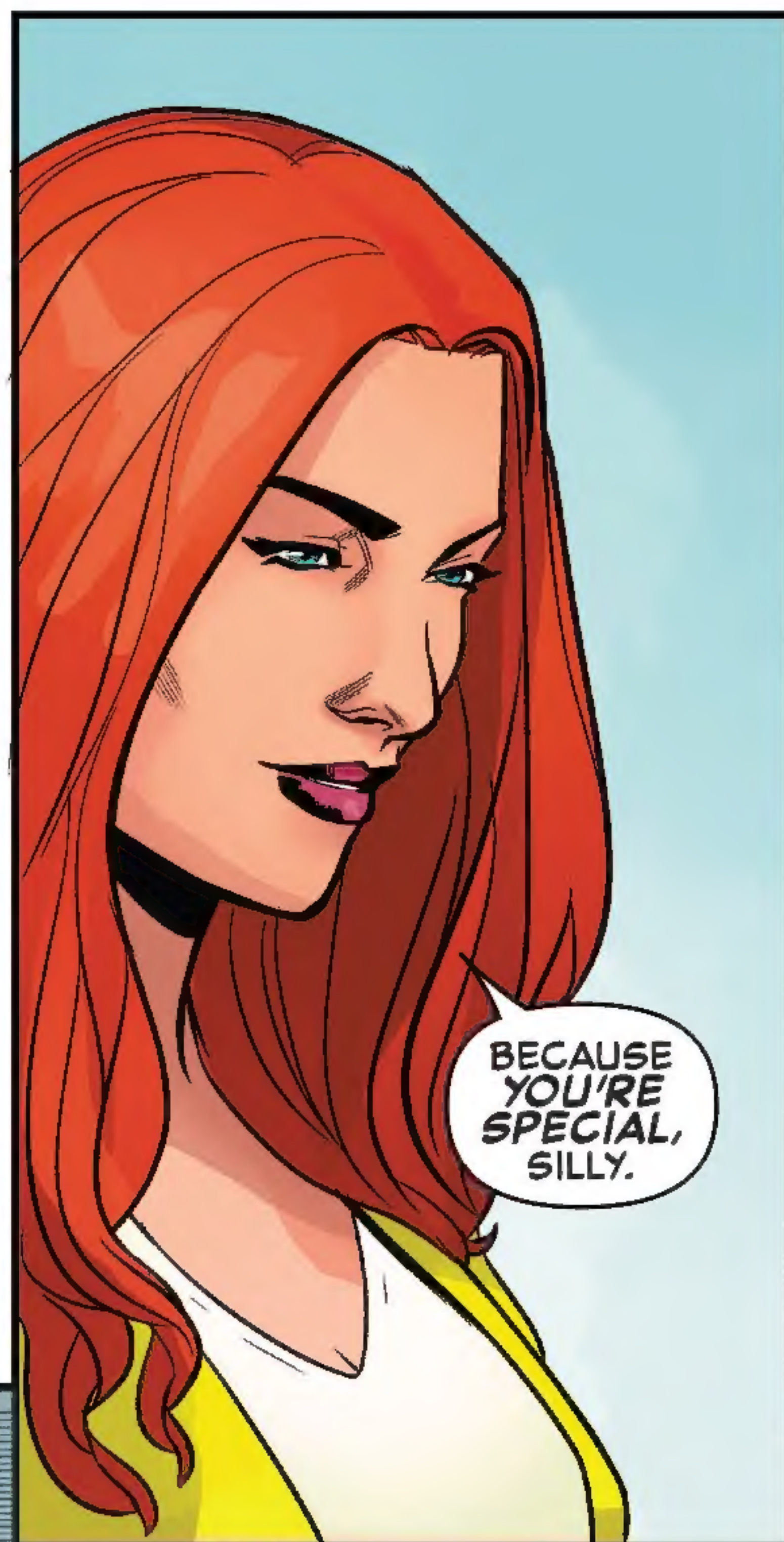
THE POINT IS, MY TIME WITH MARLO HAS CAUSED ME TO FEEL **CONNECTED** TO HER.

SO WHEN I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO COME TO EARTH, **HERS** IS THE FORM I TAKE.

HER FORM, KNOWLEDGE, PERSONALITY... ALL AT MY DISPOSAL.

BUT WHY?

WHY DID YOU COME? AND WHY DID YOU **FIND** ME?



BECAUSE YOU'RE **SPECIAL**, SILLY.



M...ME? SPECIAL?

YOU'RE...

YOU'RE, WHAT? LOOKING FOR A BOYFRIEND?

A BOYFRIEND?

I'M DEATH. WHAT WOULD I NEED A BOYFRIEND FOR?

I DUNNO. I MEAN, I'VE HEARD STUFF...



REALLY? WHAT "STUFF"?



WELL, THERE ARE THE **RUMORS** ABOUT YOU AND THANOS--THAT YOU TWO ARE THE "IT" COUPLE.

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT EXACTLY.

WHAT **WOULD** YOU SAY, THEN? AND WHAT THE HELL DOES **ANY** OF IT HAVE TO DO WITH **ME**?

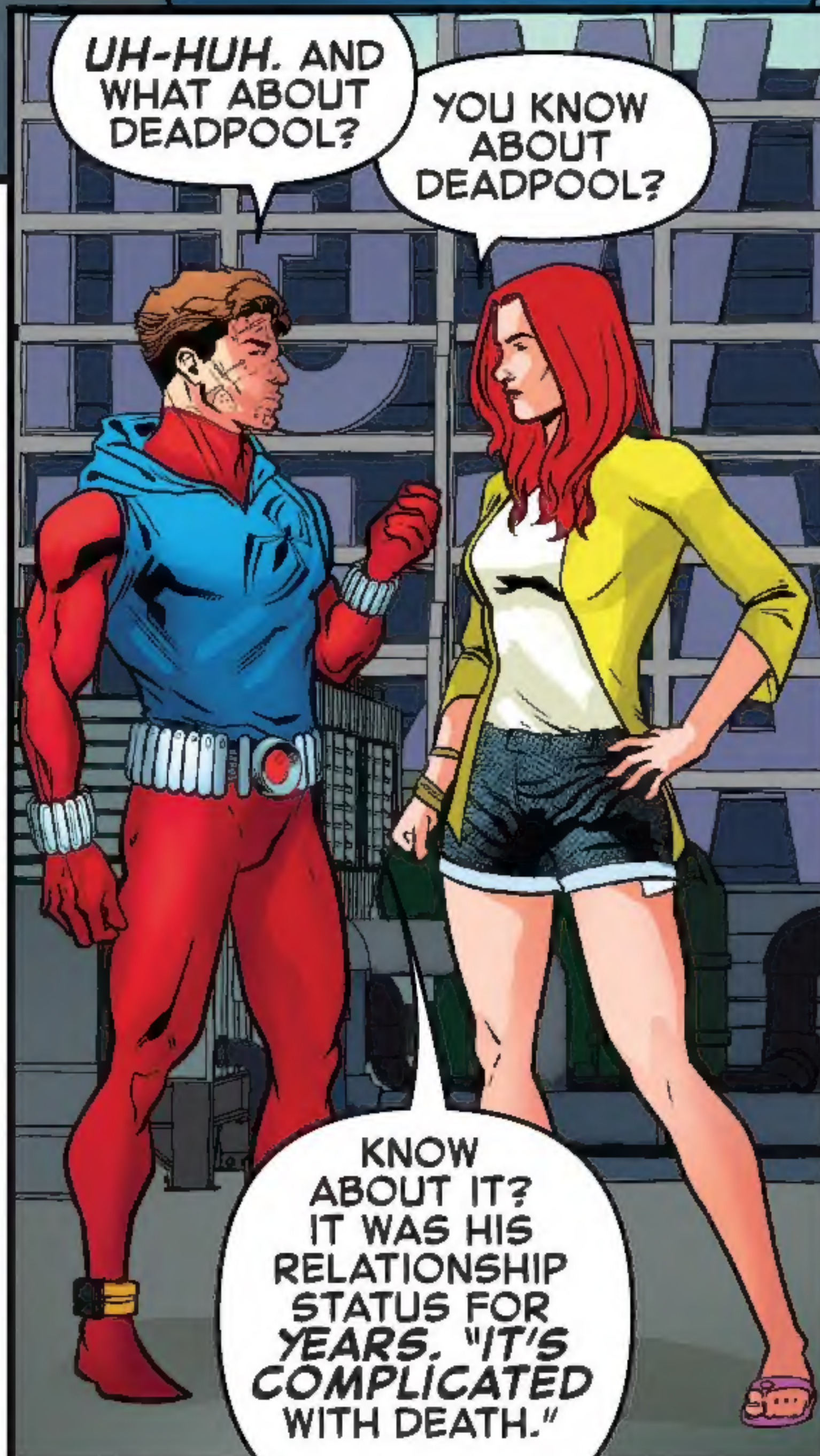


HE'S ALWAYS MAKING "OFFERINGS." SLAYING TRILLIONS TO PROVE HIS LOVE FOR ME.

AS IF TRUE LOVE NEEDS INCESSANT PROOF.

FOR THANOS, IT'S LESS ABOUT HIM LOVING ME AND MORE ABOUT "ACQUIRING" SOMETHING OF GREAT POWER.

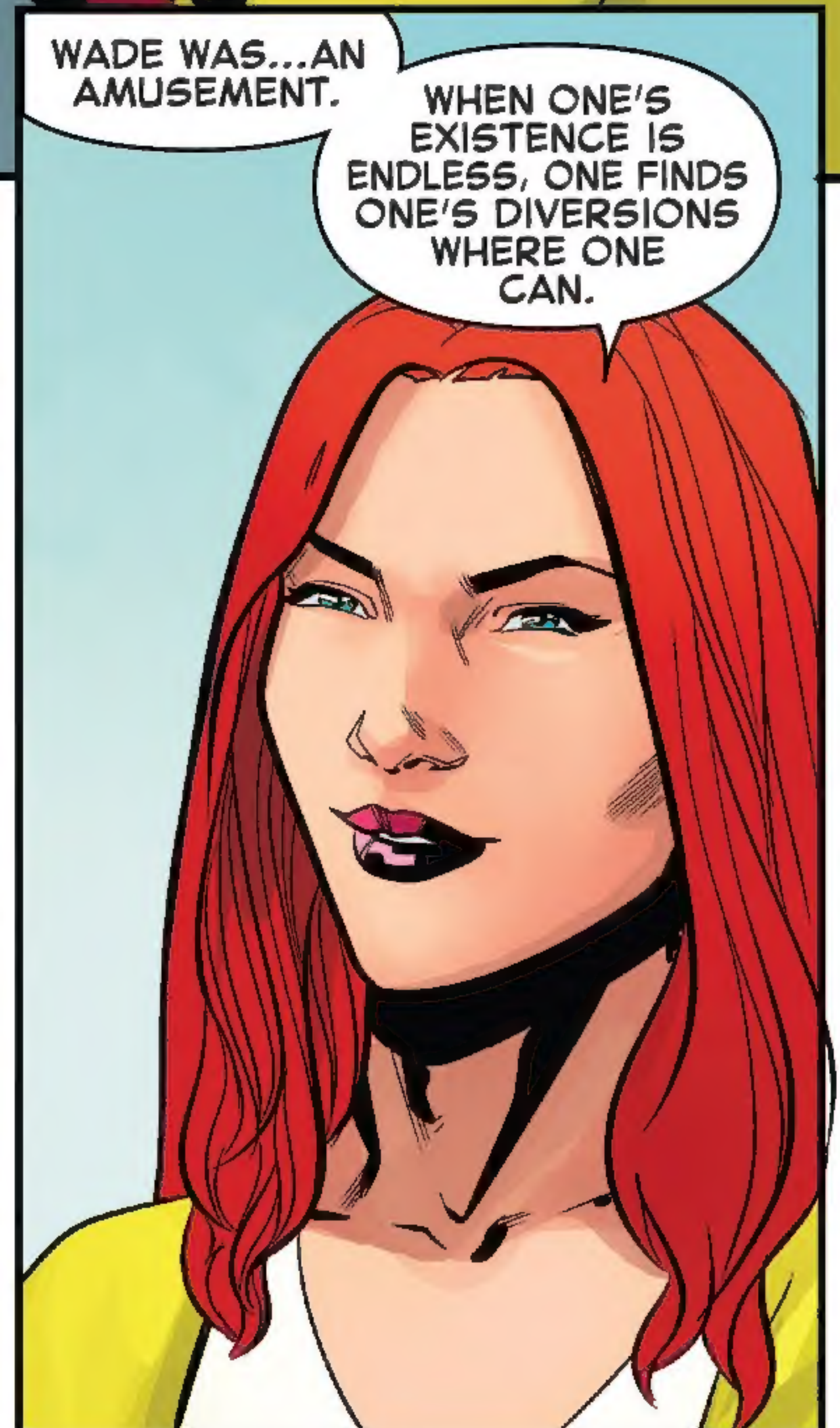
OF MAKING ME "HIS," IN THE SAME WAY HE WOULD THE INFINITY GAUNTLET.



UH-HUH. AND WHAT ABOUT DEADPOOL?

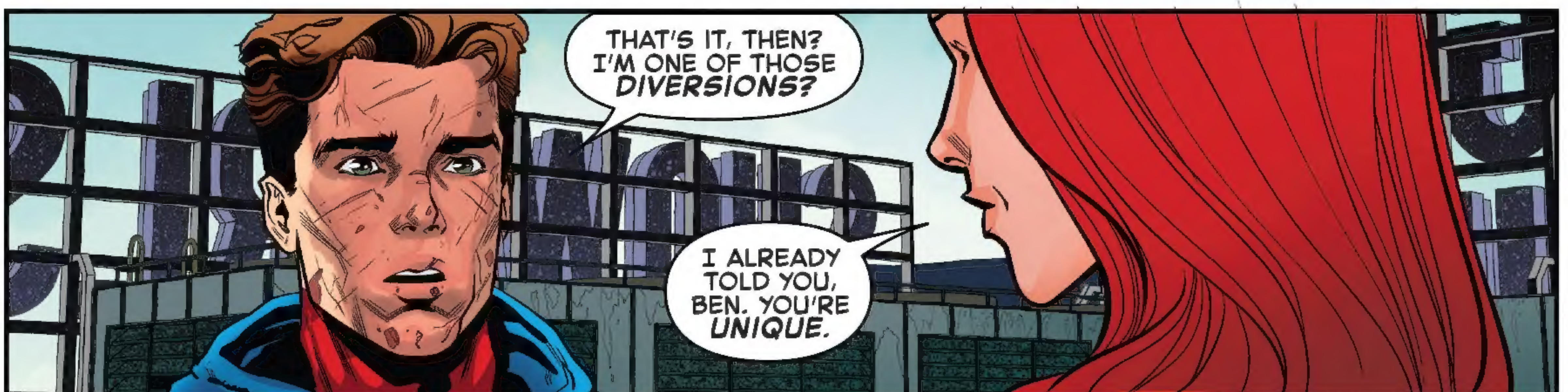
YOU KNOW ABOUT DEADPOOL?

KNOW ABOUT IT? IT WAS HIS RELATIONSHIP STATUS FOR **YEARS**. "IT'S COMPLICATED WITH DEATH."



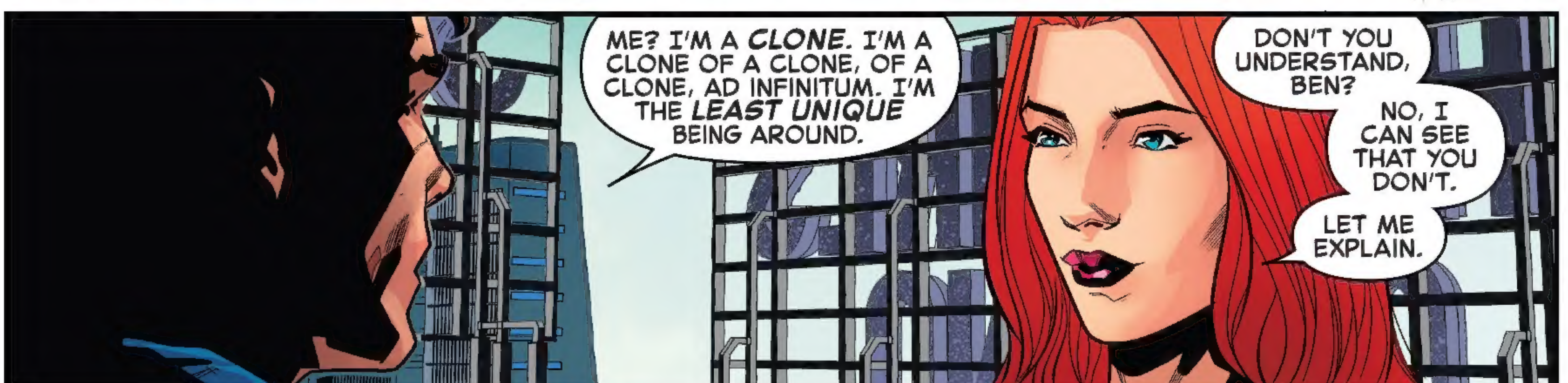
WADE WAS...AN AMUSEMENT.

WHEN ONE'S EXISTENCE IS ENDLESS, ONE FINDS ONE'S DIVERSIONS WHERE ONE CAN.



THAT'S IT, THEN? I'M ONE OF THOSE **DIVERSIONS**?

I ALREADY TOLD YOU, BEN. YOU'RE **UNIQUE**.



ME? I'M A **CLONE**. I'M A CLONE OF A CLONE, OF A CLONE, AD INFINITUM. I'M THE **LEAST** **UNIQUE** BEING AROUND.

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, BEN?

NO, I CAN SEE THAT YOU DON'T.

LET ME EXPLAIN.



YOU SUPERHUMANS HAVE ALWAYS HAD A **FLEXIBLE** RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEREAFTER.

SOME JOKE THAT IN **HEAVEN**, THERE ARE NOT PEARLY GATES BUT INSTEAD A **REVOLVING DOOR**.

BUT YOU, BEN...YOU'RE ONE OF A KIND. YOU HAVE DIED MORE THAN ANYONE.

IN THE WORLD?



IN THE UNIVERSE.



SO I CAME TO YOU. INDEED, I'VE BEEN WITH YOU SINCE YOU ARRIVED IN LAS VEGAS.

OR DID YOU THINK YOU BROUGHT CASSANDRA MERCURY'S SICK DAUGHTER OUT OF A COMA ALL BY YOURSELF?

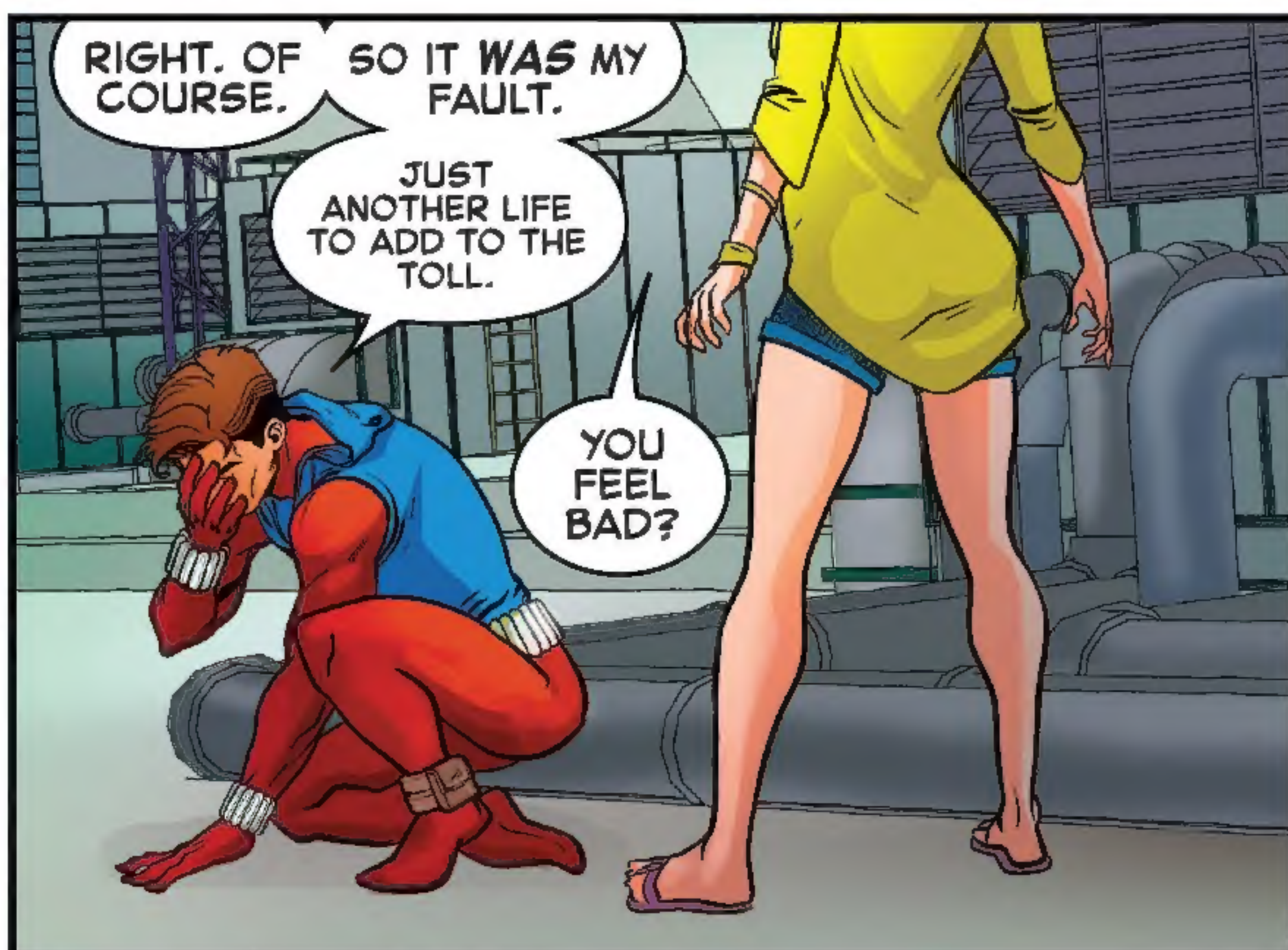
YOU DID THAT?!

I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A NICE GESTURE, CONSIDERING WHAT'S COMING.



BUT YOU **KILLED** HER! KAINE SAID HE SAW HER DIE!

NO, YOU KILLED HER. SHE HAD A BAD REACTION TO YOUR MEDICINE THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE TESTED FOR OR FORESEEN.



RIGHT. OF COURSE.

SO IT WAS MY FAULT.

JUST ANOTHER LIFE TO ADD TO THE TOLL.

YOU FEEL BAD?

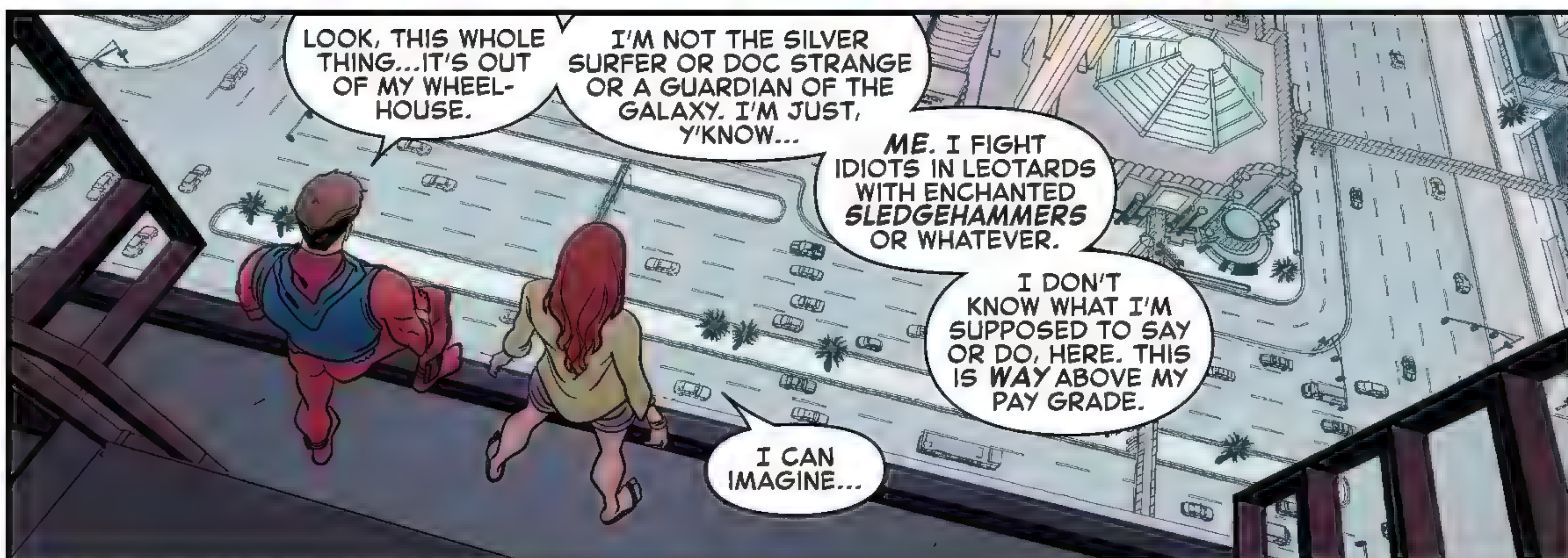


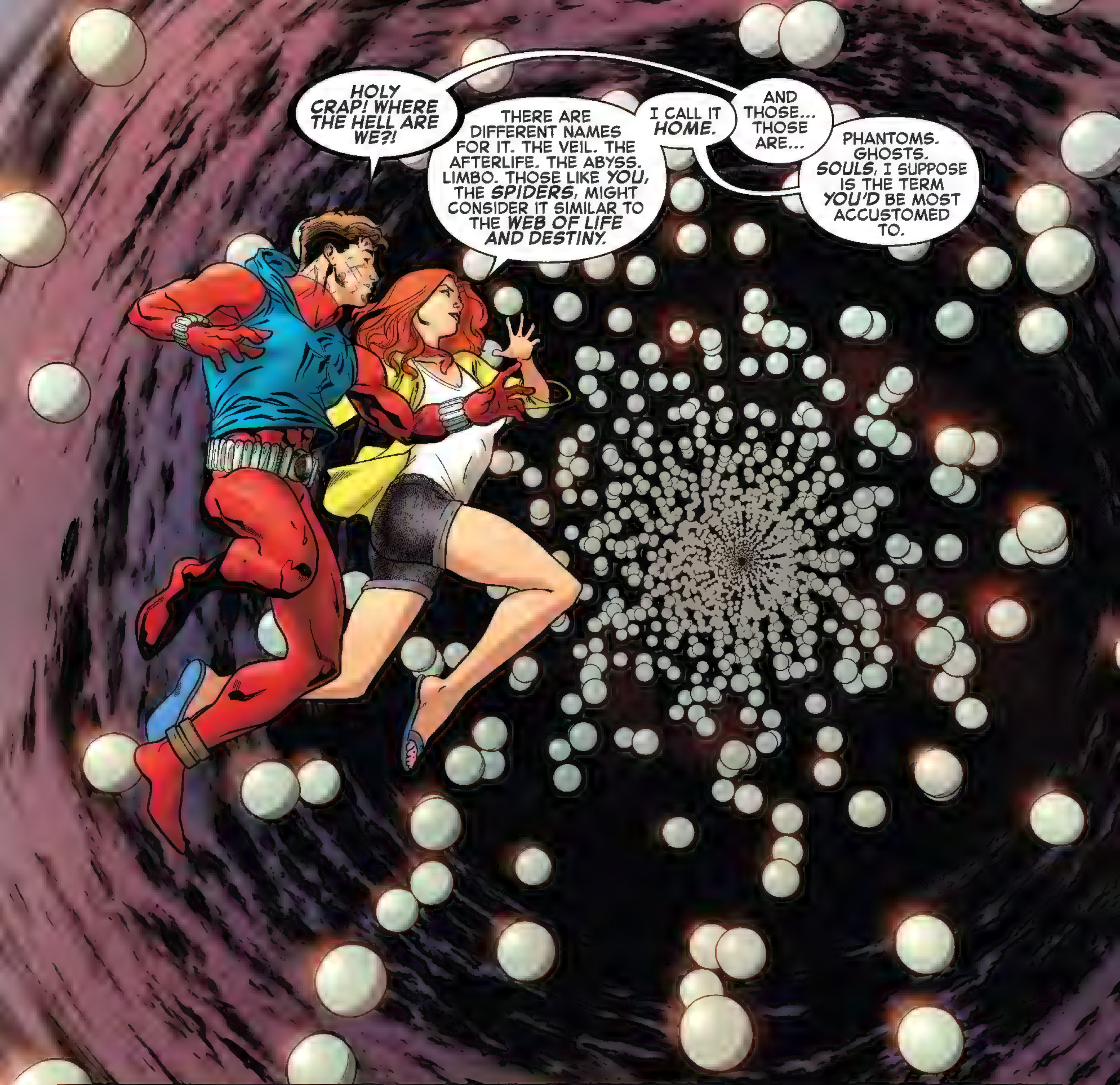
WELL, OF COURSE I DO! I'M NOT LIKE YOU!

SOME UNEMOTIONAL COSMIC THING THAT GOES AROUND KILLING WITHOUT ANY KIND OF REMORSE!



DO NOT EVER PRESUME TO KNOW HOW I FEEL!





HOLY CRAP! WHERE THE HELL ARE WE?!

THERE ARE DIFFERENT NAMES FOR IT. THE VEIL. THE AFTERLIFE. THE ABYSS. LIMBO. THOSE LIKE YOU, THE SPIDERS, MIGHT CONSIDER IT SIMILAR TO THE WEB OF LIFE AND DESTINY.

I CALL IT HOME.

AND THOSE... THOSE ARE...

PHANTOMS. GHOSTS. SOULS, I SUPPOSE IS THE TERM YOU'D BE MOST ACCUSTOMED TO.



THEY'RE... THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL.

YES. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOURS?

OH, NO. THAT'S OKAY. I'M GOOD. DEFINITELY NO--



NO! JEEZ!



OH... WOW. THAT'S...

THAT'S MESSED UP.

TO PUT IT MILDLY.

USUALLY WHEN I SEE BATTERED SOULS LIKE THIS, THEY BELONG TO SOCIOPATHS. SERIAL KILLERS.

YOURS, HOWEVER, IS VERY DIFFERENT, BEN.

EVERY TIME YOU RETURN TO LIFE, YOUR SOUL LEAVES THE ETHER TO REJOIN YOU.

BUT IT'S NOT DESIGNED TO DO THAT. A BODY CAN BE REANIMATED WITH NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS.

YOURS HAS TRAVELED TO AND FROM THE VEIL DOZENS OF TIMES. THE BACK-AND-FORTH HAS DAMAGED IT TO ITS VERY CORE.

IF YOU DIE ONE MORE TIME AND THEN RETURN...I'M AFRAID YOUR SOUL WILL SHATTER COMPLETELY.

YOU WILL DESCEND INTO MADNESS.

INTO EVIL.

AND... IF I DON'T DIE?

THEN YOUR SOUL WILL HEAL. IT WILL TAKE TIME. MUCH TIME.

BUT *GIVEN* THAT TIME, YOU WILL EVENTUALLY BE BEN REILLY ONCE MORE.

NOT THE TWISTED CREATURE THAT THE JACKAL WAS, OR THE PROBLEMATIC BEING YOU'VE BECOME, BUT A *TRUE* HERO.

CLOSE YOUR EYES.

SURE.



ALL
RIGHT. OPEN
THEM.

SO WE'RE
BACK IN
KANSAS.

YEAH,
RIGHT,
I KNOW
THAT.

SO,
WHAT'S
NEXT?

I'M
SUPPOSED
TO JUST STAY
OUT OF TROUBLE?
KEEP MY HEAD
ABOVE
WATER?

NEVADA.

I'LL TELL YOU THIS
MUCH--I'M NOT
HANGING UP THE
HOODIE.

SUCH IS YOUR RIGHT.
AS LONG AS YOU KNOW
THAT IT MAY COST YOU
IN THE END.

IF YOU
WANT TO SAVE
YOURSELF, YOU **MUST**
DO ALL THAT YOU CAN
TO PREVENT OUR PATHS
FROM CROSSING
AGAIN.

UNLESS
YOU'VE BECOME
AS SMITTEN WITH
ME AS THANOS
AND DEADPOOL...



FAIR ENOUGH.

FAREWELL, BEN REILLY. I WILL BE WATCHING YOU. YOUR JOURNEY TO REDEEM YOUR SOUL SHOULD BE AN INTERESTING ONE...

...ASSUMING YOU DECIDE TO TAKE IT.



WAIT! WHAT ABOUT KAINE?!



WHAT ABOUT HIM?

HE'S DEAD. YOU KILLED HIM.

YES, I KNOW. I WAS THERE.

CAN YOU... I DUNNO... BRING HIM BACK?



I SUPPOSE I COULD.

WHY SHOULD I, THOUGH? ISN'T HE YOUR ENEMY?

HE'S MY BROTHER. BROTHERS FIGHT.

BUT WOULDN'T YOUR LIFE BE EASIER WITHOUT HIM?

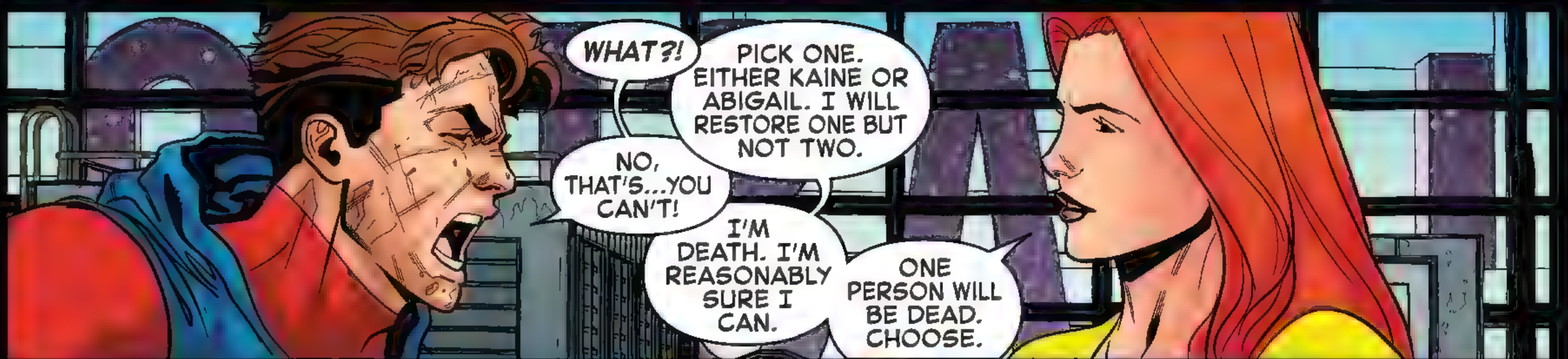
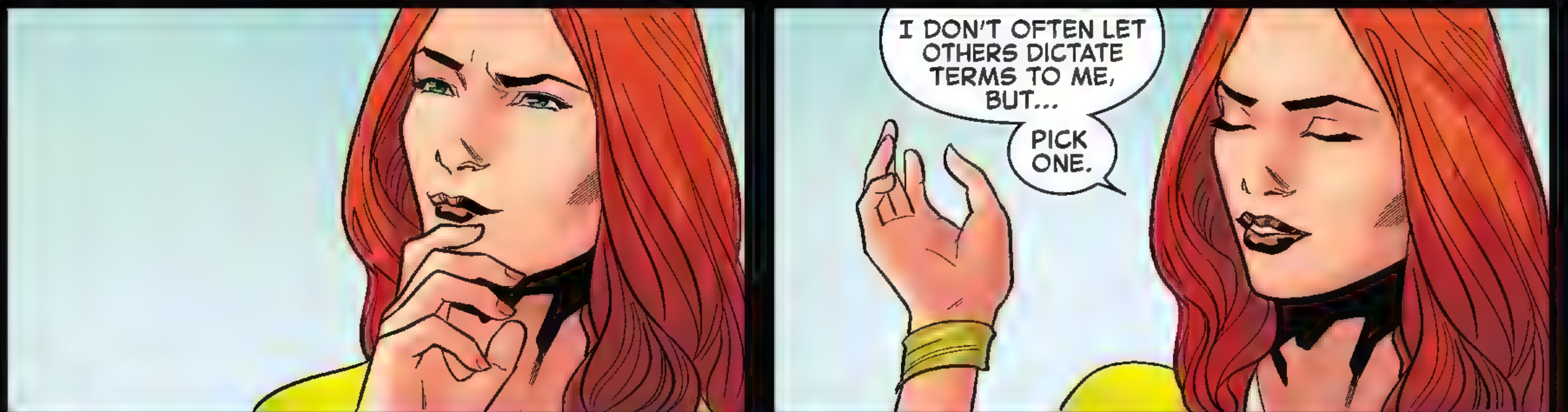
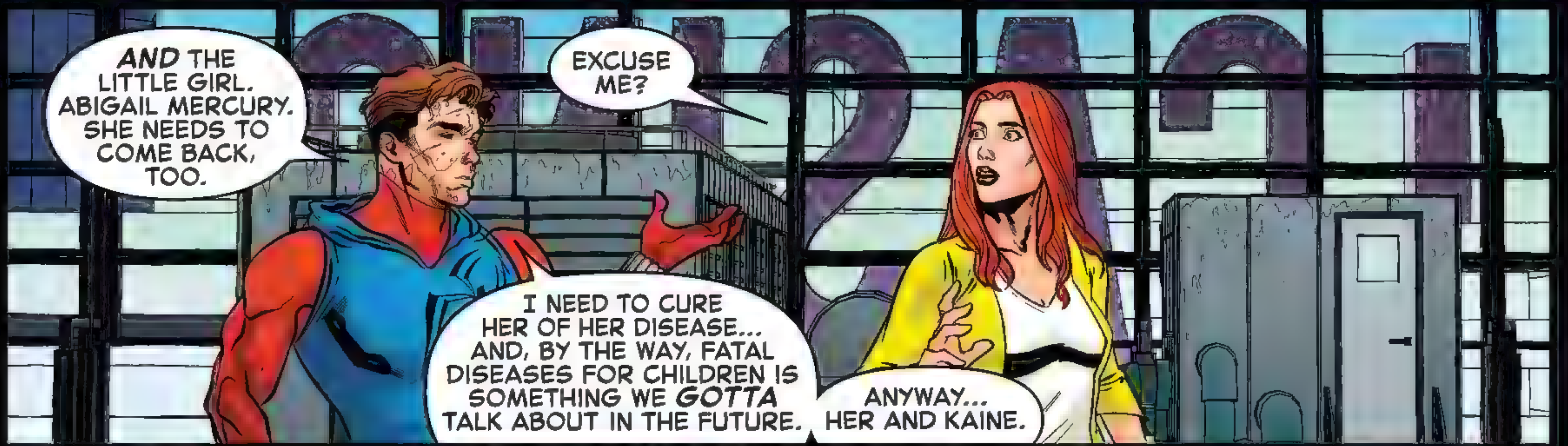


IT WOULD. BUT IF I'M TRYING TO SAVE MY SOUL, THIS SEEMS LIKE A GOOD PLACE TO START.

LOOK, THE **TRUE** MEASURE OF A HERO IS HIS ENEMIES. THE ONES WHO STAND BETWEEN HIM AND HIS GOALS.

HAVING KAINE AROUND WILL MAKE ME WORK HARDER TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING WHAT I HAVE TO SET OUT TO DO.

I SEE.



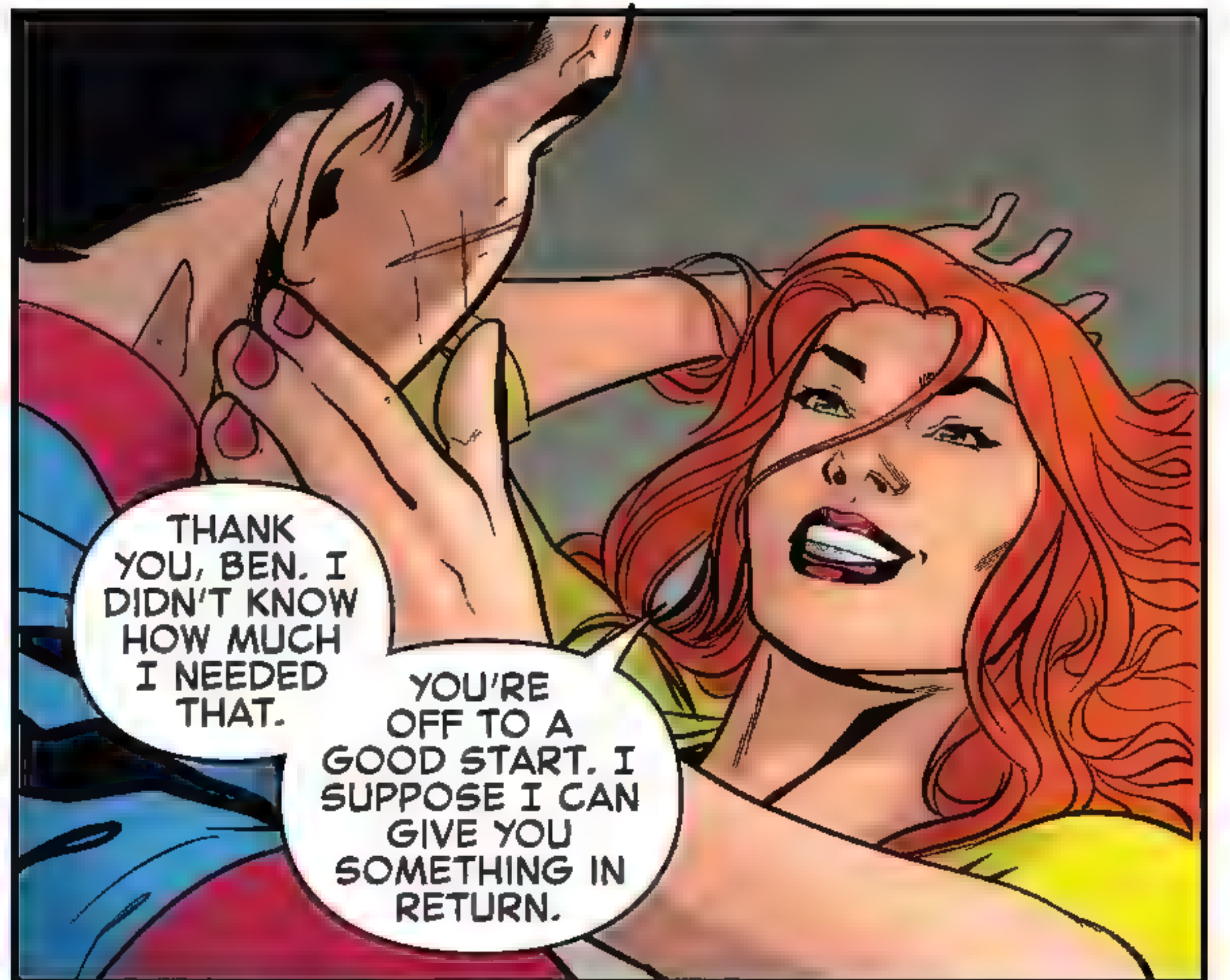




WAAAM

KILL ME,
DAMMIT!

OOFF!







...BUT
I GOT
OVER
IT.

TO BE
CONTINUED!

NEXT:



LET US KNOW HOW WE'RE DOING! DROP US A LINE AT SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM!
BE SURE TO MARK IT "OKAY TO PRINT"!

